



Hero Next Door

A publication of Civil Air Patrol History

Assistant National Historian, Archivist Captain James L. Shaw Jr.



From the Editor: Captain. Jim Shaw

I am currently trying to work on the history of the Southeast Region. I have some information but nothing very in depth. I would like to find out from our members if they have anything sitting in the closet, tucked away on a bookshelf, or maybe already in their computers. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

We are coming upon our organizations 64th Birthday. That is 64 years of continuous service from our every day heroes. What is your squadron, group, or wing doing to celebrate this momentous occasion? Are you planning any type of celebration or will we let it pass? Look around at your fellow members and take a moment to say WOW and maybe even a thank you. The December Issue of this newsletter will have some of my goals for the 2006 year and other CAP Historical Projects I am currently working on.

A day in CAP History: Colonel Leonard A. Blascovich, CAP National Historian

Since CAP 's inception some 57 years ago, we have hung our caps at six different locations in the USA. Some moves were mission directed, some moves were for convenience and some were politically motivated. CAP was established on 1 December 1941 under the Office of Civil Defense, and our first office was located, for convenience, at □ **Dupont Circle Building, Washington D.C.** On the 29th of April in 1943 CAP was transferred to the War Department. On May 4th, just 5 days later, it was again transferred, this time by the Secretary of War, to the Commanding General USAAF, and on May 15th a Manning Table (the complement of officers assigned to NHQ-CAP) was created. It was at this time that AAF Regulations directed the establishment of HQ 32nd AAF Base Unit (CAP).

Membership in Civil Air Patrol grew to **125,000, but at its control center only 17 full time staff members were employed.** In the meager office space allotted, and using 1940's hi-tech equipment--manual typewriters, telegrams, carbon paper and mimeographs--they generated all of the rules, regulations and operations orders for the rapidly growing organization. As our wartime missions increased, first with Coastal Patrol and then others, it was deemed practical for CAP headquarters to be close to the action. CAP Coastal Patrol missions were controlled by the USAAF Bomber Command (Atlantic), located at Mitchell AFB, Long Island New York. To put CAP in the area of control it was necessary for CAP to pick up and move. So, on 28 June 1943 we established a new Headquarters at. □ **500 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York.** When our Coastal Patrol mission wound down, decisions based upon our new cadet program and an increase in other activities resulted in our transfer to the AAF Training Command. Accordingly, in April 1945, we packed our boxes and moved to the □ **Texas & Pacific Building, Fort Worth Texas**

As World War II neared its end CAP's mission was further redefined and on 1 February 1946, once again we folded our tent, loaded the wagons, and moved out to: **Bolling AFB, Washington D.C.** It was at this location that most of the defining activities, missions, and restructuring to a peacetime role took place. This was the most important period of our formative years, creating, in the end, the organization as it exists today. We also saw the following key events: CAP was transferred to Air Defense Command-AAF, PL 476 was signed, CAP was moved from the Departments of US Army to US Air Force, CAP became USAF Auxiliary PL 557.

Now officially sanctioned under AF Regulations 45-11, we were assigned to HQ Command USAF as our 'parent'. Our headquarters moved from building to building at Bolling AFB till we finally occupied the top floor over the Base Exchange. As the air base and AF expanded, CAP's National Headquarters building found itself on the list for retrofit and/or rebuilding, and thus CAP needed to look for temporary quarters. It was at this time that two important events came together to determine where this would be.

The first was Colonel D. Harold Byrd's appointment, in April 1959, as CAP's new Chairman of the National Board. Col. Byrd, who had served as Wing Commander of Texas and later as Vice-Chairman National Board since August 1947, knew exactly where he wanted HQ to be housed. The second was not so much a single event as a culmination: internal politics were tearing CAP apart; and issues of command and control became heated controversies. Finally the AF Command was changed, and on 8 August 1959, CAP, now under the auspices of the Continental Air Command, moved to **Ellington AFB, Houston Texas** Headquarters at Ellington AFB was a big old wooden building built at the height of WW II, and it quickly became known throughout CAP as the "Ponderosa": a not so oblique reference to the popular TV series *Bonanza*. There it remained for more than a decade, when its next move was precipitated by two otherwise unremarkable factors: the AF's concern for the safety of its officers, and a new computer.

Because Continental Air Command was soon to be abolished (1 July 68), CAP was placed under the parentage of Air Training Command. This command required that, for the safety of its personnel, no officer would be permitted to work in a wooden building. At the same time, CAP had just leased an IBM 360 computer, which IBM refused to place in any environment that was not climate controlled. CAP had to leave Ponderosa. At Maxwell AFB, a new hospital building had just been completed. The old hospital building, which met all parties' criteria, had been vacated. Except for the morgue: this would remain, and share the building with us. On the 15 of June 1967 CAP took up residence at **Maxwell AFB, Montgomery Alabama**

While at Maxwell, CAP dedicated the building to Gill Robb Wilson, mounted an L-19 "bird dog" as a monument, and moved the bookstore and print plant from old hospital ward buildings to their present location. Another transfer took CAP from ATC to Air University for operational convenience: we were no longer just a tenant organization. AU and ATC merged to become the Air Education and Training Command on 1 July 1993. However, neither of these changes required a physical move by CAP, and so, except for one year in early 1990 to 1991, when CAP's offices were moved to Gunther AFB, while our Maxwell headquarters was refurbished and made asbestos free, Maxwell has been our home for 31 years..

As for CAP's history and records: the moves were disastrous. With each move, some irreplaceable records were lost or tossed, but the greatest damage was done during the moves from Bolling to Ellington and from Ellington to Maxwell. Unfortunately, National HQ is not alone in its callous disregard for our history. Whether through ignorance or zeal, many units, from Squadron to Region, have discarded important documents and artifacts during cleanups, shakeups, or moves. To cite some specific s: Records of membership applications from (1941 on) which included the training levels achieved by individuals.

All wartime membership, both cadets and seniors, are gone, along with all postwar related COP's and activities and most of the records of Mitchell and Earhart Award recipients. In the temporary move to Gunther many Spaatz records and original information were lost. Even recent awards have been affected. For example: who received the Falcon Awards? No records of any of those awards exist anywhere at National HQ. Neither are there any records of the original Gill Robb Wilson awards from 1964 to 1981. This is truly sad. Hopefully, from now on our members will give more thought to which papers are filed, and which are destroyed.

Member Submitted: Colonel Matt Sharkey , SER Commander

15 Nov 49 GO 16, HQ & HQ SQDN, CAP-USAF. 1. Under the provisions of Air Force Regulation 45-11, 11 January 1949, and pursuant to the provisions of letter, Department of the Air Force, subject "Activation of Puerto Wing, Civil Air Patrol" dated 23 September 1949, the fifty-second Wing of the Civil Air Patrol, to be known as the Puerto Rico Wing, Civil Air Patrol is activated at San Juan, Puerto Rico, effective 0001 22 November 1949. May 50 Annual Conf. Report. Puerto Rico Wing was activated 22 Nov 49 under Command of Col. Orlando J. Antonsanti

Air Trails Magazine December 1949 Issue



Civil Air Patrol Newsletter

Puerto Rico Wing Formed

A new Wing, the 52nd, will be launched this fall in the Civil Air Patrol, in Puerto Rico, National CAP Headquarters officials announced.

Col. James W. Thomson, chief of staff, Maj. Arthur D. Rhodes, Maj. Herbert G. Rollins, Capt. Lawrence S. Heral and Capt. John S. Finlay conferred with Government and school authorities of the West Indian island, as well as with aviation enthusiasts there.

The CAP officials discussed at some length with the school authorities the integration of CAP aviation training, and it is anticipated that a number of Squadrons will be activated.

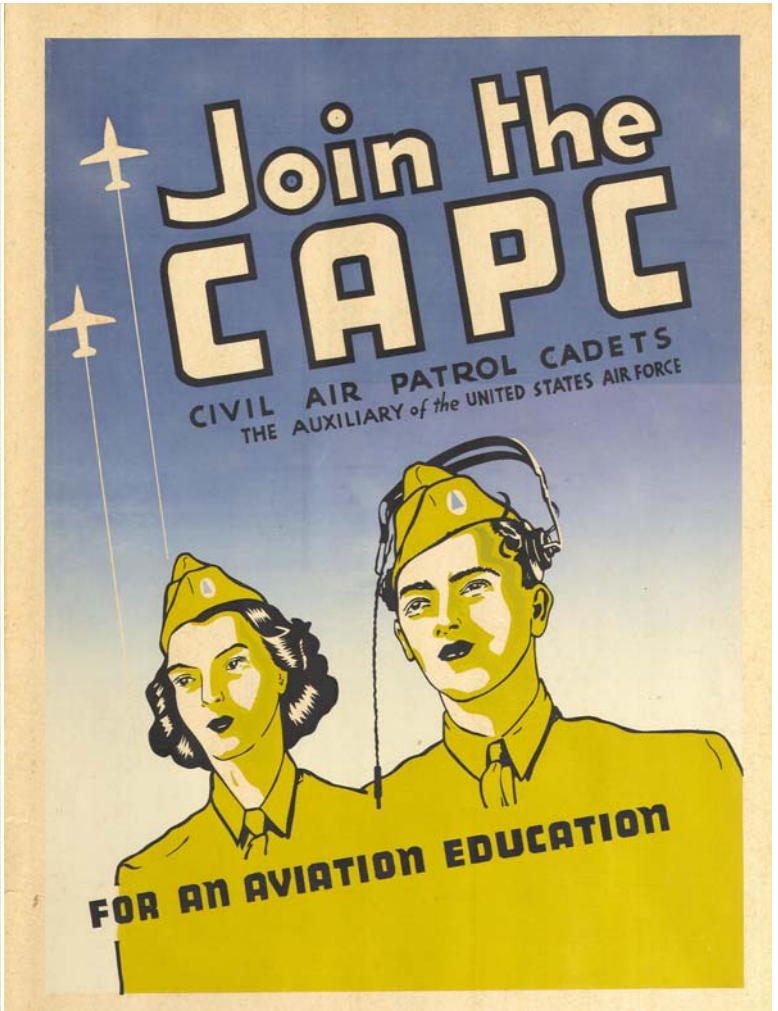
AIR TRAILS Pictorial



BURNELLI FIGHTS BACK!

Pieces of History: Lt. Colonel Todd Engleman GAWG GP4 Deputy Commander

Civil Air Patrol has always sought to recruit highly qualified and dedicated individuals to help make this organization what it is today. They have used various methods of recruitment from sponsoring air shows in the earlier years to hosting events like the NCASE. These are a few examples of some of the recruiting posters and other media.







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